



UNCOVERING IN COLLEGE

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Foundations of Writing
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03/02/2015



Problem

Often Muslim Women lose themselves when they come to college

- Why do they choose to uncover?
- How does it effect them personally?



Background

Studies of College Muslims

- Who:
 - Abdelnabi, Safia and Amani
- What:
 - Told their story about their life experiences
- Why:
 - So that others around them could maybe understand where they are coming from
- When:
 - Abdelnabi: 2015, Safia: 2010, Amani: 2013

Background

- Abdelnabi
 - Wearing the hijab
 - “There are two distinct phases in their hijab life: pre- Sept.11 and post- Sept.11.”, (Abdelnabi, 2015)
 - After 9/11 it became a burden to carry.
 - Uncovering
 - “When you put the scarf on, you have to understand that you are representing a community”, (Abdelnabi, 2015)
 - “The decision to remove their headscarf simply came down to a choice, as they grew older.”, (Abdelnabi, 2015,)
 - This can be a huge responsibility for a person to handle.

Background

- Safia
 - Wearing the hijab
 - “I had to explain Islam all the time to strangers. I just wanted to walk down the street and just be Safia.” (Safia, 2010, pg 2)
 - Having to explain something everyday can be tiring.
 - Uncovering
 - “A woman in her teens and 20’s, that’s her time to be beautiful and to be young. I really wanted to take advantage of that.”, (Safia, 2010, pg 2)
 - “It’s painful to wear something on your head that in some way gives you a relationship with these criminals, with these terrorist.” (Safia, 2010, pg 2)

Background

■ Amani's Story

- “It’s 12 am and I am currently at a party surrounded by drunk college kids, limitless booze, lowered inhibitions, and an eagerness to have a good time. I usually don’t consciously make the decision to be in these types of settings. Usually this isn’t a problem for me. I really don’t care for peer pressure and I can totally navigate myself around drunk people. But, tonight was kind of different. For the first time I was really tempted. That automated “Stay away- it’s haram!” internal response system of mine was running low, and I depended solely on will power and self control.
- This shows how people change when they come to college. Now every since this day Amani feels as though she isn’t worthy. She feels as if she let not only herself down but her family and the religion.

Method

- Interpret ethnographic data by:
 - Visiting the organizations
 - Interviewing Muslim students
 - Surveying people on their behaviors

Findings

At Bloomsburg University there are 8 Organizations for Christians

- Campus Crusade For Christ
- Catholic Campus Ministry
- Disciplemakers Christian Fellowship
- Gospel Choir
- Impact Movement
- Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship
- Orthodox Christian Fellowship
- Protestant Campus Ministry

Yet there is only one for Muslims

- Muslim Student Association

Findings

That means the Christians have more support. Meaning they are:

More Likely

- Practice what they believe when they have so many opportunities to do so.
- Keep their focus on why they came to college

Less Likely

- Give into peer pressure
- Lose themselves
- To feel unaccepted

Findings

Interviewing Muslim students:

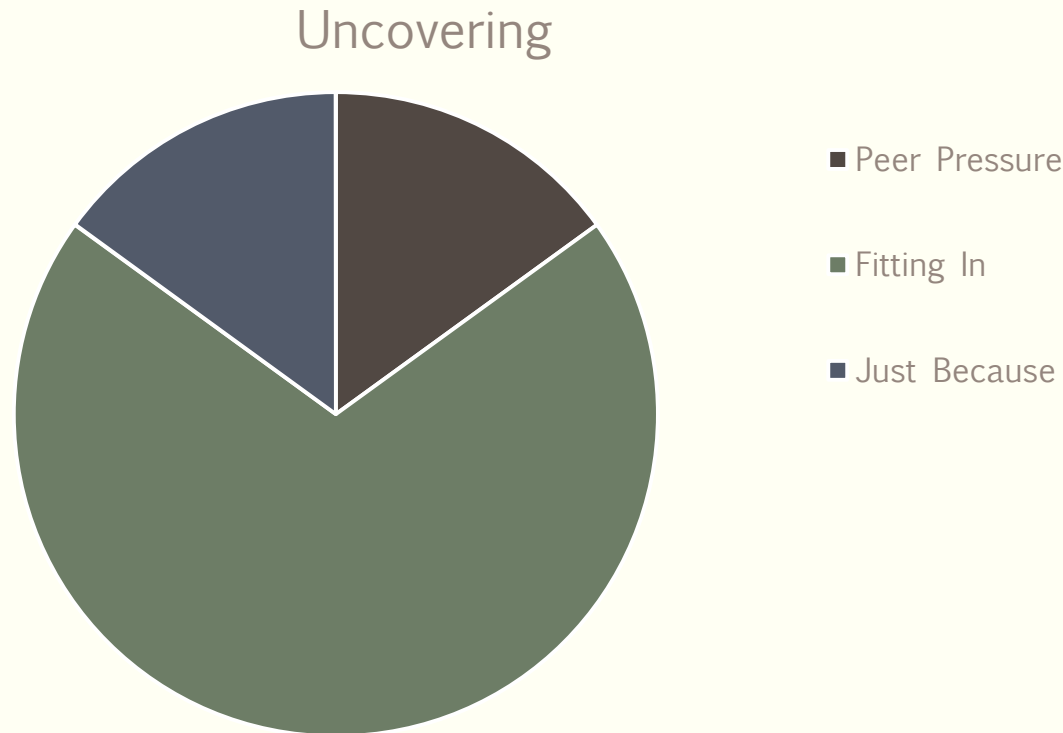
- I asked: Do you always feel comfortable wearing your hijab?
 - Student 1: I like wearing my hijab but I don't always feel comfortable wearing my hijab. I don't like having to answer the questions. Such as "What is that called?", "Is that apart of your religion?"
 - Student 2: I normally feel comfortable, despite the occasional stares I get when I walk downtown.
- Both students said they sometimes feel uncomfortable.
- They both spoke about how others treat them.
- This shows that since they aren't very comfortable they may be more likely to consider removing their hijab, order to fit in.

Findings

- I asked: How often do you do things you normally wouldn't?
 - Student 1: I usually go out every weekend. So 2 days out the week. But, when I was home I would usually stay in on weekends.
 - Student 2: Up here I usually go out on “Thirsty Thursday”, then Friday and Saturday. So 3 days out the week. Although when I was home I wouldn't go out on Thursdays and when I went out on weekends I wouldn't do the things I do up here. Such as, going to all the parties and drinking.
 - Both students admitted to doing things they normally wouldn't.
- I asked: When doing these activities did they uncover? Why or why not?
 - Student 1: Yes I do remove my hijab. I do it so that I don't disrespect my religion with the way I am behaving.
 - Student 2: I do uncover because I don't want what I am doing to make Islam look bad.
 - Both students tell me they uncover and both reasons are because they don't want to suggest to others that, that is what their religion is about.

Findings

Surveying people: What is the real reason on why they uncover?



This shows that most Muslims do it to fit in. Meaning they might not always feel accepted. Or they no longer want to deal with the every day questions or stares they receive. They may even do it so that they don't have to live a "Double Life." Meaning, wearing the hijab in front of other Muslims. Although, taking it off in front of non-Muslims.

Findings

- These findings show that. Most Muslims on campus do things in order to fit in. So if there were more organizations or things that involve other Muslims, like there is for Christians they would be less likely to act out. Only few admitted that they uncovered just because. Rather than all the ones that admitted they do it to fit in.
- If Muslims were presented the opportunity of having more things involving Islam on campus they would probably feel more comfortable or open. Just because they would know that they are surrounded by others who do understand them. Not only as a person but religiously as well.

Proposed Response to Problem

- University
 - If there isn't a Muslim Student Association on campus. Widen your search, look in the neighborhood. Don't think your alone, there is probably another student searching for the same thing.
- Masjid
 - There may not be a masjid on campus but, there is usually one around somewhere in town. Even if you have to search.
 - Visit the masjid, you may find what you need here. You may just need a little uplifting.
- Family
 - Keep in touch with your family members. Update them, this way they are involved in what you do. Even if they are far away.
 - You never know if they faced similar issues.

Conclusion

The Culture at Bloomsburg relating to Muslims

- Abdelnabi and Safia
 - Both wore their hijab since they were in their preteens.
 - They both felt as though hijab was a big commitment.
 - Eventually in their later years, they decided to uncover.
- Amani
 - She thought she could be in an environment where everyone was drinking and not want to participate.
 - She stood strong for not only herself but for the religion as well.
 - Is an example of what Muslims students on campus face all the time.
- Students feel it'll be helpful if:
 - There was more organizations
 - Place where they can pray with no photos and is quiet
 - Masjid near or on campus

Conclusion

- The data collected suggest that if Muslims on campus had a place to surround themselves with others like themselves, they would maybe be less likely to uncover. Since most Muslim students to it to fit in.
- College is where you are given the opportunity to grow. Your suppose to grow in every aspect of your life. Meaning religiously as well.
 - So uncovering shouldn't be an option in mind. If anything students should want to improve themselves by showing that they are strong Muslims. Even if that includes being different or



References

- Abdelnabi. (2015). “Lifting the veil”
- Amani. (2013). “Muslim Girls and Alcohol”
- Safia. (2010). “Why I chose to take off my hijab”